

The Lancaster Glassworks

By Gary Beatty

In 1964, I began to collect antique bottles. Back then, we simply referred to them as "old bottles." I was living, at the time, in a village in Carroll County, Ohio, known as Levittsville. I met a gentleman by the name of Tip Boyd. He taught me to call my collection by its proper title, "antique." Little did I know that Mr. Boyd had one of the foremost figural and barrel collections in the state of Ohio. It was Mr. Boyd who introduced me to some books on Early American Glass. I soon had an appetite to read all I could on the subject. The late Paul Ballentine urged me to buy all the books and articles I could find on glass to use as reference material.

I was born and raised at Lancaster, Ohio. So, when I found out there was a glass house at Lancaster, N.Y., I quite naturally was drawn to that name. I wondered which came first, Lancaster, Ohio, or Lancaster, N.Y. I found out that Lancaster, N.Y. was incorporated in 1849, forty six years after Lancaster, Ohio. In 1803, settlers from Lancaster, Pa. came to Ohio and in that year, incorporated New Lancaster, after their former town. Twenty years later, the "New" was dropped and the town was simply called Lancaster, Ohio.

An interesting thing to note is that all three had three things at least in

common, their name, their inhabitants and their chief vocation. Just as people migrated from Lancaster, Pa. to Lancaster, Ohio, so it was with Lancaster, N.Y. In 1849, a Mr. Charles Reed and seven other men arrived in Lancaster, N.Y. from Lancaster, Pa., for the sole purpose of establishing a furnace for making glass. So you see, it would be entirely possible to have a relative back then, living in all three towns. Shortly after 1900, Lancaster, Ohio established its glass house, which operates today and boasts that it is the world's largest tableware manufacturer. The company is known as Anchor Hocking Glass. So you see, all three had the same name, the same inhabitants and the same main vocation.

Let us now concentrate on the Lancaster Glass Works of New York. In 1849, Mr. Reed and partners lit a match to fire a furnace which would produce a glass that you and I enjoy and collect today.

The first adventure had a five-pot furnace. It was located on Factory St., Now named Court St. Some of the workmen were involved in the ownership. The firm was called Reed, Allen, Cox and Company. How long this first company lasted is not exactly known, but soon some of the workmen, along with Mr. Cox, sold out to a Mr. Shinn and thus the company name changed

to Reed, Shinn and Company. In 1859, a fire all but destroyed the factory. It was rebuilt and operated until 1863. In that year, a Dr. Frank James and N.B. Gatchell purchased the firm. It was then called James, Gatchell and Co. In 1866, James and Gatchell purchased all of the stock and operated henceforth under their names. They advertised that they manufactured glass of every description and maintained a large inventory. Harry Hall White chuckled at this, for it seems in his research of glass houses, they all made this boast. However, surviving workmen would later testify that the main output was simply bottles and flasks. Some time after the Civil War, "but not exactly known," James bought out Gatchell and the firm name became "The James Glass Work." The 1866 directory lists the workmen's names.

Glass Blowers

J.D. Fry	B. Myers
J.J. Voll	J. Springer
H. Kupper	

Potmaker

Sherman Remington

Mold Maker

Thomas Leary

Following the Civil War, the patent medicine and bitters boom began. Lancaster met the demands for these illustrious quacks. Dr. James also maintained a company store for his workmen. They drew much of their pay in staples needed for everyday living. Mr. James also accepted goods from people in exchange for his glass. These goods in return sold in the company store. Because of the previous great fire, the company owned its own fire apparatus that was also shared with the community.

In 1881, Dr. James retired and sold out to the workmen who organized the Lancaster Cooperative Glass Works. In the 1920's Mr. Harry Hall White had the good fortune to be able to talk

with Frank James, son of Dr. James, former owner, and a John G. Lambrix, a glass blower who started with the firm in 1861. From these two gentlemen, Harry was able to establish what was blown there. Later, through artifacts found, this list would be born true.

Bottles:

Hostetters
 Dr. Fish Bitters
 Plantation Bitters
 Burdocks Bitters
 Warners Tippecanoe Bitters
 Warners Safe Bitters
 Wisharts Pine Tree Cordial
 Clarissy's White Oil Linament
 Shilo's Cough Cure
 John Root Bitters
 Stimson & Hebblewhite Blacking
 Monitor Inks

Flasks

Scroll
 Traveler "Pikes Peak"
 Railroad with Eagle
 Urn-Cornucopia
 Clapsed Hands
 Shoo-Fly
 Picnic

To be sure, there was much more they were not able to remember. Many of the handpieces have been found that were made for the blowers' own use, such as rolling pins, bowls, doorstops in the form of frogs and turtles, flowers, paper weights and more.

Lancaster, New York contributed much to our Glass Heritage. I can't help but think how exciting it would be to have visited there during this time period.

Here is a summary of company names:

Reed, Allen, Cox and Co.	1849
Reed, Shinn & Co.	
James, Gatchell & Co.	1863
The James Glass Workds	1866
The Lancaster Cooperative Glass Works	1881



Grouping of three pontiled and smooth base sodas with "Lancaster Glassworks, N.Y." embossings.



Three rare flasks with "Lancaster" embossings. (Left) is a GXIV-4, "Lancaster, Erie. Co. N.Y. — Traveler's Companion", (center) a GXIV-5, same embossing as the GXIV-4 except a slightly smaller size flask. And (right) a rare pocket flask embossed "Lancaster Glassworks, Full Pint".



Cornucopia and Urn flasks were a popular item with the glassblowers at the Lancaster Glassworks. Six different mold variants of this flask are listed in McKearin's "American Glass". (Left) is a 1/2 pint example (GIII-15), (right) is a pint size (GIII-16) with the "Lancaster Glassworks, N.Y." markings.



Scroll flasks were very popular and were blown by many glasshouses in the mid-1800's. Those found with "4x4" embossed in reverse on the base are thought to be from the Lancaster Glassworks.



Highly sought after by collectors, the Lancaster Glassworks versions of the "Success to The Railroad" flask (GV-1 and GV-2) is embossed with an early locomotive instead of the more commonly seen horse pulling cart.



Bitters bottles blown at the Lancaster Glassworks. (Left) Drake's Plantation, (center) John Root's, and (right) E. Dexter Loveridge Wahoo Bitters". All three are found in a wide range of colors.



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FRONT COVER

Looks like Bob Villamagna's old Dr. Poland will need a bit of his own medicine after taking this fall. He'll probably have to rub some on his horse to.

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